

92. *Civil Suits*.—An important appeal from the decision of a Subordinate Magistrate was made, in the High Court, by one Antáji Keshav Tábé of Asgoli, bearing on the question of the right of Government to teak-trees in occupied khoti lands in Ratnágiri. The High Court decided against Government. This decision and its effects on protection have been already referred to above; it is not considered to be generally conclusive, and the general question regarding the rights of occupants has still to be decided.

93. The increase in the number of cases compounded, or brought into Court, was, in some degree, due to the fact that the period now under report comprises 15 months, while the figures for 1891-92 were only for 12 months.

(2). *Protection from Fire.*

94. The usual operations under this head were carried out, and a larger area was fire-traced in all Divisions excepting that of Northern Kánara.

95. The results of the year under report compare favourably with those of the year before, except as regards the cost, which has increased from 16·4 to 19·34 rupees per square mile.

96. The following table shows the results for each Division :—

Division.	AREA IN SQUARE MILES.			Proportion of failures to area attempted.	Cost.		Proportion of area under fire-protection to total area of Reserves.
	Attempted	Failures.	Protected.		Per square mile protected.	Per acre protected.	
Northern Division, Kánara	509·93	·84	509·09	·17	24·64	7·3	...
Central Division, Kánara	184·29	3·69	180·6	2·00	39·04	11·7	...
Southern Division, Kánara	73·30	1·78	71·52	2·42	11·55	3·46	...
Belgaum	256·07	3·45	252·62	1·3	7·21	2·16	...
Dhárwár	56·43	5·22	51·21	9·25	12·71	3·81	...
Bijápur	45·31	·08	45·23	·17	11·05	3·31	...
Kolába	92·43	4·13	88·30	4·46	2·04	·61	...
Ratnágiri	20·13	·01	20·12	·05	·44	·13	...
Total in 1892-93	1,238	19	1,219	1·53	19·34	5·8	62·6
Total in 1891-92	1,046	25	1,021	2·39	16·14	4·8	53·2
Increase or Decrease in 1892-93	+192	—6	+198	—86	+3·2	+1·0	+9·4

97. The most successful, and at the same time cheapest, operations were carried out in Ratnágiri. No doubt the marked success attained there is due to the fact that cattle are excluded from the forest-area and the people have less inducement to set fire to the jungles there than in other parts of the Circle.

98. The cost per square mile in the Central Division, Kánara, has increased from 21·15 to 39·04 rupees. The Divisional Officer has given no satisfactory reason for the increased cost of protection.

99. The cost of operations in the Northern Division, Kánara, also increased from 18·89 to 24·64 rupees, and for this the Divisional Forest-Officer gives no reason.

100. In the Southern Division, Kánara, the expenses were reduced one-half.

101. In Belgaum, the area specially protected was increased from 170 to 252 miles. Unfortunately, great damage was done in the areas closed for regeneration in the Railway-fuel-reserve. The Divisional Officer reports that there is every reason to believe that several of the fires were purposely caused, but the offenders could not be traced. With reference to the areas burnt in the Railway-fuel-reserves, the Divisional Officer adds, "the harm caused by a fire in fuel-cuttings is out of all proportion to that done in ordinary open forest. In the former a large portion of the young growth is completely destroyed, its place being taken by new shoots several years in retard of the age of the unburnt portion. When the plants are not completely destroyed, their leaves are burnt up and not replaced until the ensuing year, whereby a whole year's growth is lost. Unless some special penalty can be imposed upon the villagers, it is doubtful whether any departmental measures will ever be sufficient to check these fires, which render any attempt at a systematic plan of working the fuel-forests absolutely futile."

102. The forests, referred to in the above quotation, which extend to 45,000 acres, are extremely valuable and give an annual nett yield of about Rs. 2-12-0 per acre. With proper protection, they could be made to yield in the course of the next 30 years a much larger

income. The Collector remarks, in connection with this matter, that "probably, as the relations between the Department and the villagers improve, wilful damage of this kind will tend to become less frequent," but that "it is impossible to propose special penalties unless a series of offences is clearly brought home to them." Unfortunately, if it is considered necessary to bring home to individuals the fires they have caused, a series of offences cannot be established, as the experience of several years shows. As regards the relations of the villagers to the Forest-Department, I do not think that they are bad, or that improvement can be looked for in that direction; it is quite natural that they should set fire to the jungles, as long as it is to their immediate interest to fire them and they can do so with impunity. Their object in firing the forest is (1) to induce an early and good crop of grass, (2) to kill trees and so open out the jungle and increase the crop of grass, (3) to obtain manure for their fields in the ash washed down from the forest and (4) to clear the ground for sporting purposes.

103. The following areas are estimated to have escaped fire without adoption of special measures:—

			Acres.
Northern Division, Kánara	...	...	507,345
Central Division, Kánara	...	...	400,467
Southern Division, Kánara	...	...	773,225
Belgaum	...	...	277,612
Dhárwár	...	...	239,598
Bijápur	...	...	127,455
Kolába	...	...	224,003
Ratnágiri	...	...	10,365
Total			2,560,070

104. The area reported as having escaped fire without the taking of special measures amounted to 3,982 square miles, or 74 per cent. of the whole area, during 1891-92. During the year under report, it amounted to 4,000 square miles, or 74·3 per cent. of the whole area.

105. *Northern Division of Kánara.*—In the Haliyál- and Supa-forests, protection is reported to have been very successful. Eleven fires took place in Haliyál, in one of which the offenders were traced. These fires were quickly extinguished, and only a small area was burnt. In Supa, 13 acres were burnt. The offender was prosecuted and fined Rs. 5. Three other fires also occurred, but no trace of the offenders could be found.

106. *Central Division of Kánara.*—The Divisional Officer reports that protection from fire in the Yellápur and Mundgod-ranges was very successful, but that in Ankola a larger area was burnt than that burnt in 1891-92. The number of fires observed was 68. No offenders were traced.

107. *Southern Division of Kánara.*—In the reserved forests which were protected by fire-lines, 1,344 acres are said to have been burnt. The origin of the fires that occurred has in no case been discovered. The number of cases in which fire was brought to notice was 35.

108. *Belgaum.*—Here, fire-protection has, it is reported, been on the whole eminently successful, although the number of fires was 99 against 64 of the year before.

109. The great damage done in the fuel-reserves in the Khánápur range has already been alluded to.

110. *Dhárwár.*—The area protected was practically the same as that protected in the preceding year. In the specially-protected areas, about 5 square miles are shown to have been burnt. The Divisional Officer attributes the origin of the fires to carelessness on the part of travellers in throwing into the jungle lighted *bidis* and torches, but this cause cannot satisfactorily account for all the fires that occurred. The number of cases in which fires were discovered was 33. No offenders were detected.

111. *Bijápur.*—The closed forests of Bádámi and Bágalkot were specially protected. It is said that only 51 acres were burnt.

112. *Kolába.*—In Kolába, special protection appears to have been very satisfactory; the area attempted is not, however, large enough.

113. *Ratnágiri.*—Here the results were eminently satisfactory.

(3). *Regulation of Grazing and Protection from Cattle.*

114. Under the rules sanctioned in Government Resolution No. 3595, dated 23rd May, 1890, grazing is permitted in the unclosed portions of forest.